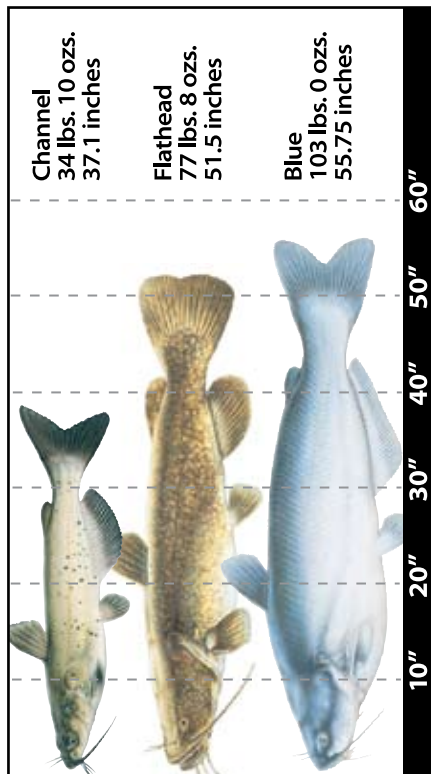


Missouri Pole/Line Record Catfish*



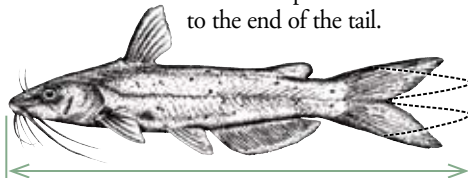
*As of January 2005

How to Measure a Fish

It is important to know the length of the fish you harvest. Legal fish length limits vary from one area to another.

Follow these steps to determine length:

1. Lay the fish flat.
2. Push or hold the mouth shut.
3. Press the tail lobes together.
4. Measure the fish from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail.



For more information about catfish, or to obtain an adhesive ruler with identification features, write:

Missouri Department of Conservation
P. O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
(573)751-4115

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Complaints of discrimination should be sent to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, OR U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 18th and "C" Streets NW, Washington D.C., 202400, Missouri Relay Center—1-800-735-2966 (TDD).

8/2007

FIS003



Know Missouri's CATFISH

Channels, blues and flatheads are Missouri's three most popular catfish species, and anglers are increasingly interested in catching big fish. Consequently, the Missouri Department of Conservation has begun to manage each species differently—with management tailored to each species' growth potential. Anglers need to be able to identify all three species. With some practice, and the help of this guide, you should be able to easily identify Missouri's most popular catfish species.

MISSOURI'S CATFISH



Protruding lower jaw

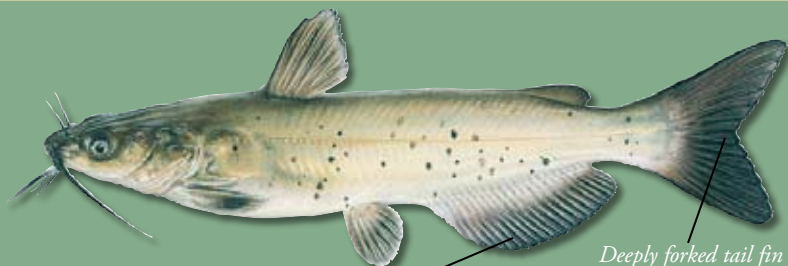
Tail fin slightly notched with upper lobe lighter in color

Flathead Catfish

The flathead is a slender catfish with a broadly flattened head and a projecting lower jaw. The back and sides are pale yellow to light brown, and mottled with dark brown or black (mottling often is poorly developed in adults from muddy water). Adults commonly are 15 to 45 inches long and weigh 1 to 45 pounds. The state pole/line record is 77.5 pounds.

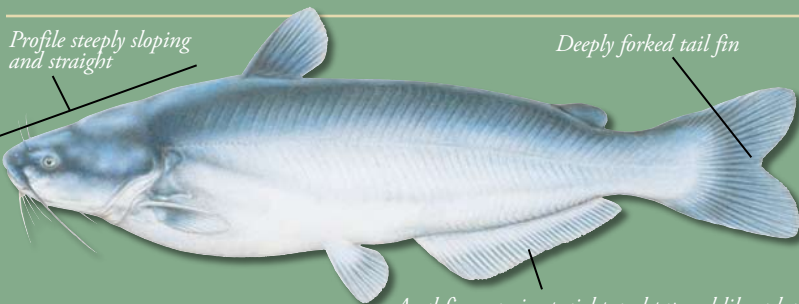
Channel Catfish

The channel catfish is also slender, but with a projecting upper jaw. It is similar to the blue catfish, but has scattered, roundish dark spots on its back and sides (spots often are absent in the smallest young and large adults). The anal fin margin is rounded, and the back and sides are olive-brown or slate-blue. Breeding males are a deep blue-black on the back and sides, with the head swollen and knobby and the lips thickened and fleshy. Adults commonly are 12 to 32 inches long and weigh 1 to 15 pounds. The state pole/line record is 34.6 pounds.



Deeply forked tail fin

Anal fin margin rounded, with 24-29 rays



Profile steeply sloping and straight

Deeply forked tail fin

Anal fin margin straight and tapered like a barber's comb, with 30-35 rays

Blue Catfish

These are similar to channel catfish, with one significant difference—the anal fin margin is straight and tapered. They never have dark spots on the back and sides. The back and upper sides are pale bluish-silver, grading to silver-white on the lower sides and belly. The light coloring often leads to confusion with the white catfish—a species neither native nor common to Missouri. Adult blue catfish commonly are 20 to 44 inches long and weigh 3 to 40 pounds. The state pole/line record is 103 pounds.

Joseph R. Tomelleri illustrations